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ABSTRACT

This one year training program consisted of four graduate courses aimed at developing an awareness and understanding of the ethnic heritage of Asian Americans in selected elementary school teachers. It was designed to equip classroom teachers with information, strategies, and materials needed to help their students become more ethnically aware, and consequently, more sensitive to cultural differences. The courses were about: (1) acculturation through education; (2) education of the culturally different learner; (3) children from culturally different backgrounds; and (4) curricular needs of culturally different students. A complete outline of each course is presented in this report. In evaluating the results of the training program, it was found that the participants' attitudes toward Asian American ethnic groups were positively improved. (JD)

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A Training Program in Asian-American Culture for Elementary School Teachers

by

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A Training Program in Asian-American Culture for
Elementary School Teachers

Abstract

This one year training program consisted of four graduate courses funded by HEW, aimed at developing an awareness and understanding of the ethnic heritage of Asian Americans of selected elementary school teachers in the greater Houston area. It was designed primarily to help equip classroom teachers with information, strategies, and materials needed to help their students become more ethnically aware, and consequently, more sensitive to cultural differences.

The training program had a twofold purpose as its goal. First, in terms of the cognitive domain, the selected elementary school teachers gained knowledge of various Asian-American cultures, and became competent in curriculum planning of ethnic studies. The second purpose was in the affective domain. Through this training program, it was found that the participants' attitudes toward teaching ethnic studies and their attitudes toward Asian American ethnic groups was positively improved.

Twenty elementary teachers representing fourteen independent school districts were selected for this training program. They were required to complete two courses (six credit hours) each semester. The titles of these courses offered by UH/CLC are:

Acculturation through education
Education of the culturally different learner
Children from culturally different backgrounds
Curricula needs of culturally different students

Based on the objectives of the program, a Cognitive Test (CT) and an Attitude Inventory (AI) were constructed to measure trainees' gained knowledge and changing attitudes. Both tests were administered prior to the training program and at the conclusion of the program. Scores on pre and post tests were analyzed by paried T statistical analysis. The difference of Cognitive Test (CT) between pre test taken in September and post test taken the following April is found significant at .01 level with df=19 (T=11.30). The Attitude Inventory (AI) also demonstrates significant change (T=7.92) between pre and post tests.

The trainees' accomplishments are not only reflected by their scores on pre and post tests, but also in the workshop which they, themselves, completely designed and executed at the conclusion of the project. They were able to make use of the knowledge they gained throughout the training project, feeling confident to share their knowledge and experience with other school teachers during the one-day in-service workshop. Compared with their colleagues not in the program, they found they were much more knowledgeable about Asian-American heritage and people who possess such heritage.

I. Nature of the Project

The purpose of this project was to develop an awareness and understanding of the ethnic heritage of Asian-Americans of elementary school teachers. This project focused on a training program in ethnic studies for elementary school teachers in the southeastern counties of Texas. It was felt that most elementary school teachers needed to develop multicultural cognitive and affective teaching skills that would enable them to apply the newly gained competency in the classroom, in the local school districts, and in their interrelationships with all peoples. These trained teachers were "seed" teachers from which a richer, goal-oriented and educated group would grow to form a nucleus of educators in and around Houston, Texas to strengthen teaching about our multiracial population.

There was a sequence of four graduate courses (12 credit hours over two semesters) offered to twenty carefully screened elementary school teachers from seventeen school districts around Houston during the academic year of 1978. Most of these individuals applied these course offerings toward a master's degree (M.S.) with an emphasis in Multicultural Education at the University of Houston at Clear Lake City. The advisory council as required by the funding agency, DHEW, as part of the project indicated that there was strong, committed interest and joint-cooperation from the school districts in support of this proposed training program.

Due to the diverse content of ethnic studies, this one-year training program had its scope narrowed to specifically Asian American ethnic heritages, and their influences in the United States. The Asian culture merely served as a content area, while the methodology of teaching in ethnic

heritage studies presented in this project designed to reach all multi-ethnic audiences.

A unique characteristic of this project was the involvement of public school administrators, elementary school teachers, parents with Asian American ethnic backgrounds and University faculty members with diverse expertise.

II. Rationale Behind this Project

Despite the fact that the "melting pot" concept now is defunct from its earlier position (Banks, 1975) and that ethnic cultures are endemic in the American society, today, many Americans still consciously or sub-consciously believe that ethnic groups should and will eventually abandon their unique cultural components and assimulate those characteristics of Anglo-Americans, the dominant cultural group.

Social science specialists in ethnic relations have documented abundantly the fact that ethnicity and ethnic cultures are integral parts of our social system and that these aspects of American life are exceedingly resistant to change or eradication (Gordon, 1964). As Glazer and Moynihan have perceptively stated, ethnicity "is fixed deep in American life generally; the specific pattern of ethnic differentiation, however, in every generation is created by specific events" (Glazer and Moynihan, 1970).

Furthermore, ethnicity is a salient part of the American social order. A sophisticated understanding of our society cannot be grasped unless the separate ethnic communities (which exist regionally as well as socially) that constitute American society are seriously analyzed from the perspectives of the various social sciences and the humanities.

The following statements quoted from Minority: U.S.A. succinctly point out the importance and the value of ethnic studies to both the majority and minority groups.

> "Minority group problems are nation problems. They affect all Americans, the majority as well as the minorities. Equal treatment for all is a key part of the American dream of a better future. We can make it possible for the members of minorities to add greatly to their country's life." (Finkelstein, et. al., 1971.)

Because ethnicity is a salient part of our social system, it is essential that students master the facts, concepts, generalizations, and theories needed to understand and interpret events which are related to intergroup and intragroup interactions and tensions. In recent years, educators have begun to realize the importance of ethnicity in American society and the need to help students develop more sophisticated understandings of the diverse ethnic groups that make up America and have a greater tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences. Responding largely to student demands and community pressure groups, educational institutions at all levels have made some attempts to put more information about ethnic groups into the social studies, language arts, and humanities curricula.

A. Multicultural Education at University of Houston at Clear Lake City

In the State of Texas, the implications of multicultural education have been strongly recognized and are emphasized by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) since 1971. According to a recent requirement from TEA, multicultural education will be a major task and educational issue. The understanding of the multicultural society and the children who come from various cultural backgrounds is particularly stressed by this organization.

In order to meet the multicultural requirements of TEA, University of Houston/Clear Lake City has developed a series of courses to be offered for graduate students who are working on their master's degrees as well as their educational certificates. Each course has its unique role as one of the required courses leading to a teaching certification, endorsement and/or master's degree in certain areas. For instance, Educ. 5031: Acculturation through Education, is one of the suggested courses for all education master's degrees; while Educ. 5731: Children from Culturally Different Backgrounds, is required for diagnostic teaching endorsement and supervision certificate.

Up to the year of 1977, only Educ. 5031: Acculturation through Education, had been offered to graduate students on a regular basis. Meanwhile, a master's degree program with emphasis in multicultural education was under process. Presently, the program has been developed and brochures of this program are available upon request.

The courses listed in the UH/CLC catalog for M.S. in multicultural education provide in time to come, a wide range of ethnic and cultural studies. The scope and the content of these courses serve as a broad foundation for improving graduate students' value judgements and their competency in curriculum planning in teaching multicultural education. Nearly all graduate students enrolled in the program on Professional Education at the University are full-time public school teachers who have great influence upon their classroom pupils while they are teaching and learning about multiethnic objectives. They play the most important variable in the ethnic studies program, since their attitudes toward ethnic studies and ethnic cultures are crucial. Many

teachers, especially Anglo-American teachers, may fear teaching ethnic content; particularly if their classes include ethnic minorities. Giving a teacher the opportunity to express his or her feelings and perceptions in graduate study, then comparing these developing sensitivities with the attitudes of other teachers and clarifying his or her racial feelings is necessary to develop an understanding of various ethnic minorities.

Teaching about ethnic content is legitimate and acceptable in public schools today. Yet, integrating ethnic content into regular school curricula and the elementary school demands professional training. Sensitive and knowledgeable teachers may not be able to present ethnic material content curriculum in terms of structure, sequencing, selection and emphasis, instructional tools, methods used, etc. unless they are trained in methodology. The best approach to training teachers is not through in-service training, but in the university setting.

With qualified teachers and well planned ethnic curriculum content, school children can benefit a great deal from ethnic studies as Bank indicates (1975, p. 460).

> "Ethnic studies will teach them that there are other ways of living and being, and that to be racially and ethnically different does not mean that one is inferior or superior. More humanistic views of other cultures are imperative within our increasingly interdependent and ethnically polarized world. Humanistic views of other groups and cultures may help to create the kind of racial and ethnic harmony that our society must have to survive in the twenty-first century."

B. Needs in Studying Asian-Americans: Regional and National

The demands for new instructional materials and programs for ethnic minorities have not been widely met. In some regions and school districts in the United States, other ethnic minorities such as Chicanos and Black

Americans exceed the number of Anglo-Americans in the school population. In these districts, educators have been more sensitive to the need for programs which deal with these minorities. Yet, Asian-Americans, one of America's most diverse and interesting ethnic groups, are rarely systematically studied in the elementary and high school grades nationwide. One of the major reasons is the lack of knowledge by the public school teacher in understanding, becoming aware of the ethnic background of the Asian-American, and applying this knowledge to the school program.

In the history of Asian immigrants to the U.S., Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, and Filipino Americans have been the predominant subgroups since 1820. A series of Congressional actions such as the Gentlemen's Agreement between the U.S. and Japan in 1907-1908, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Tydings and McDuffie Act of 1934 limiting Filipino immigrants has restricted the Asian immigrants to the U.S. until 1968.

In 1965, Congress passed the Immigration Act that eliminated quotas based on national origins and instituted fair immigration policies. This act became subsequently effective in 1968. Since then, the number of Asian immigrants to the U.S. has increased substantially (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1970-1979). In 1973, 23 percent of the total immigrants came from Europe, 31 percent from Asia, 45 percent from Canada and South America and 1 percent from other regions. Compared to other groups, Asian immigrants are the only group that have had a sharp increase since 1970. Unfortunately, there is no complete data available regarding the Vietnamese refugees after the fall of South Vietnam in 1975. In the decade 1960-1970, the number of Oriental Americans increased more than 55 percent while the

entire U.S. population increased by 13.3 percent (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1970). On Census Day, 1970, the number of Japanese Americans among them had increased 27 percent, the number of Chinese Americans had increased 83 percent, and the number of Filipino Americans had increased 95 percent over 1960 figures.

The majority of the Oriental Americans have remained a part of the nation's urban population. Today, 1.2 million of them - 90 percent of total - live in urban areas. In the greater Houston area, the population of Asian Americans has also grown rapidly during the past decade. There were 2,731 Oriental Americans in 1960 and 11,949 in 1970 (Standard Metropolitan Census data, 1970). Since 1970, due to the Vietnam Conflict, there has been an increase of 46.6 percent of Oriental Americans in the Houston area (Texas Employment Manpower Commission, 1977).

In addition to the statistical figures of the increasing population of Asian-Americans, their struggles in the U.S. can not be overlooked. Amy Uyematsu indicates the following direction:

> "Asia Americans can no longer afford to watch the black-and-white struggle from the sidelines. They have their own cause to fight, since they are also victims--with less visible scars of...white institutionalized racism. A yellow movement has been set into motion by the black power movement. Addressing itself to the unique problems of the Asian Americans, this 'yellow power' movement is relevant to the black power movement in that both are part of the Third World struggle to liberate all colored people." (Banks, 1975, p. 319)

Despite the fact that Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans have achieved high educational and economic mobility, such traditional measures of success are misleading and divert attention from the serious psychological and social problems that Asian Americans still experience in American life, from their cultural characteristics. The economic mobility of Asian Americans,

and the factors which can explain it, should be researched in ethnic heritage studies. However, when Asian Americans are studied, the focus should be on their values, identity, ethnic institutions, histories and cultures, and not only on their economic success. Focusing on the economic and educational attainments of any ethnic group is much too narrow and will fail to help students fully understand and appreciate the complex nature of any ethnic group's experience and culture. Chun-Hoon, in commenting on aspects of the Asian-American life that should be included in the school curriculum writes the following:

> "There needs...to be a recognition of Asian-American personalities in the teaching of the Asian-American experience so that there can be some discovery of the common human dimension shared by Asian and Americans alike." (Chun-Hoon, 1973)

In 1970 there were about 1.46 million Asian Americans in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1970), out of a total national population of 204 million people. It's believed that the Census report of 1980 will indicate a higher percentage of Asian Americans. Oriental Americans consist of many ethnic groups with a great deal of similarities and diversities. The attitudes, values and ethnic institutions often differ within Japanese-American, Chinese-American and Filipino-American communities. Nevertheless, Asian Americans have had some parallel similar experiences in the United States.

Because of their tremendous diversity, similarities and unique life experiences in the U.S., the study of Asian Americans can greatly help elementary pupils increase the knowledge of their own ethnic heritage and develop respect for cultural differences. Thus, this training program was designed primarily to help equip classroom teachers with the information,

strategies, and materials needed to help their students to become more ethnically aware, and consequently, more tolerant of cultural differences.

III. Objective of the Program

This training program had a twofold purpose as its goal.

First, in terms of the cognitive domain, the selected elementary school teachers were expected to become knowledgeable of various diverse Oriental-American cultures, and become competent in curriculum planning of ethnic studies. The final goal was the implementation in the public school at the completion of this training program.

More specific objectives are stated as follows:

1) To help trainees clarify feelings about their own ethnicity and about the concept of cultural pluralism and related social issues.

2) To provide information about ethnicity and the process through which ethnic groups adapt and change.

3) To present the implications of multiculturalism for education in American society.

4) To explore the characteristics of the Oriental-American and their cultural backgrounds which affect their school-age children.

5) To develop the skills in curriculum planning of ethnic studies, particularly of Oriental-American cultures.

6) To gain innovative instructional methodology to be incorporated into the learner's background and scholastic work.

The second purpose was in the affective domain. Through this training program, it was believed that the elementary school teachers' attitudes toward teaching of ethnic studies and their attitudes toward Oriental-American ethnic groups would be positively improved.

The explicit objectives are presented in the following paragraphs:

1) To make known the fact that all contributing cultures in the U.S. make the interrelationships among them more crucial and multicultural understanding more imperative.

2) To appreciate and accept the various cultures represented by school children through effective interpersonal communication with persons of diverse ethnic backgrounds--students, teachers, parents--especially those of Oriental Americans.

3) To realize that multicultural education is the structuring of educational priorities, commitments and processes in order to reflect the reality of cultural pluralism as a fact of life in the U.S.A.

IV. Contents of the Program

There were twenty elementary school teachers participating in this training program. The selection of these teachers was competitive. Four major factors were considered during this screening process. First, the composition of the trainees for this program must have been able to represent various school districts in different locality. Secondly, selected trainees must have had teaching experiences in several grade levels. Thirdly, the trainees must have been willing to share their experiences of this program with their colleagues and administrators upon completion. Finally, the trainees must have possessed unique cultural backgrounds and cultural experiences such as traveling, teaching overseas, etc. The final twenty trainees chosen consisted of two males and eighteen females and represented fourteen school districts. The ethnic composition of the group was four Hispanic Americans, two Blacks, one Chinese, one Filipino, two German, four Irish, one Italian and the rest had ancestors from Great Britian.

Regardless of their different school districts, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, this group of trainees worked very closely in a cooperative

and relaxed atmosphere. They were all highly motivated and interested in the materials presented by the instructors, Drs. Esther Lee Yao and Philip J. Lanasa. Overtime class period was often seen. During the beginning of the semester, they even prepared and brought into Dr. Yao's class the kind of food eaten by the ethnic group which was covered by the instructor on that night. However, such practice was "terminated" at the request of the instructor on the grounds of gaining too much weight!

During the two-semester training program, participants were required to take four graduate courses entitled Acculturation through Education, Education of the Culturally Different Learner, Curricular Needs of Culturally Different Students and Children from Culturally Different Backgrounds. The outline of these four courses is presented as follows:

Course One: Education 5031: Acculturation through Education (1st semester)

1) Historical studies of various ethnic groups in our American society.
   a) Analysis and identification of individual's ethnicity.
   b) Early experiences of migration.
   c) Problems encountered during assimilation and accommodation to the dominant society.
   d) Process of acculturation.
   e) The cultural contributions of diverse ethnic groups to American society.

2) Implication for teaching and for development of and emphasis on multicultural education.
   a) Educational opportunities in the U.S.
   b) Socioeconomics status in America.
   c) Lifestyle in this land.
   d) Gaps among ethnic groups as a result of lacking mutual understanding.

3) Creation of a teaching module (unit of study)
   a) Philosophy development
   b) Needs assessment of community and school.
   c) Behavioral objectives identified in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.
   d) Teacher-made and commercially available materials incorporated in module development.

Course Two: Education 5032: Education of the Culturally Different Learner (1st semester)

1) Focus on Oriental Cultural Backgrounds.
   a) Historical ties among all oriental nations.
   b) Traditional cultures: family relations and structures
      child rearing techniques
      value systems
      religions
      languages and lifestyle

2) First generation immigrants and their descendants in the U.S.A.
   a) Social adjustment.
   b) Financial conditions and establishments.
   c) Physical environment.
   d) Generation conflicts.

3) Emotional condition and needs of Oriental-American children.

4) Different teaching strategies applied to Oriental-American children.
   a) Learning activities.
   b) Teaching materials.
   c) Teaching methods.
   d) Interpersonal relationships between teacher and students.

Course Three: Education 5033: Curricular Needs of Culturally Different Students (2nd semester)

1) Curriculum Planning of Ethnic Heritage Studies.
   a) The reality of cultural pluralism in classrooms.
   b) The consideration of learners' multicultural backgrounds.
   c) Unique learning process of culturally "exceptional" learners:
      - Aspects of learning: content learning, problem solving, and critical thinking
      - Motivation in learning
      - Learning conditions
      - Learning styles
      - Learning abilities
   d) Steps in Curriculum Development of Oriental-American Cultures.
      - Objectives of the curriculum
      - Content of the Curriculum
      - Evaluation of the curriculum

2) Development of activities guide for use in public schools.

Course Four: Education 5731: Children from Culturally Different Backgrounds (2nd semester)

1) Instructional Methodology Based on the Developed Curriculum.
   a) Effective interpersonal communication among teacher, students and parents, value clarifications and dynamics in the elementary classroom.
      - Teacher's attitude toward parents and children
      - Involvement of all parents and children
      - Verbal and non-verbal expressions to parents and children
      - Daily self-evaluation in teacher's attitude
   b) Different teaching strategies applied to non-Oriental-American children.
      - Learning activities
      - Teaching materials
      - Teaching methods
   c) Design and develop a teacher's handbook.

The instructional methods used in this training program included lecture, group discussion, field trips, simulation games, class demonstration, panel discussion, resource persons and presentation of slides and films. Students also had opportunities for large group involvement as well as small group interaction when several learning centers were set up by the students. During the first semester, six panel discussions presented by local resource persons were recorded on video tapes. The resource persons were invited by the students and represented the ethnic group during each discussion on Asian Americans. The size of the panels ranged from three to six people including both male and female. Their residential locality, educational and occupational backgrounds vary within each ethnic group. In other words, there were resource persons with doctoral degrees as well as only grade school level. Each student was also required to develop one curriculum module which can be adapted by the trainee's classroom pupils. The designed modules consist of a great variety of audio visual teaching

materials which reflect Asian-American cultural heritages. Based upon those modules, an activities book was developed in the following spring semester.

The spring semester began with a series of celebrations of the Chinese Lunar New Year. First, the trainees participated in the one day Chinese Cultural Festival sponsored by UH/CLC Chinese Student Organization. They were not only in charge of part of the program but also provided technical assistance to the art performance in the evening. This was well received by the public and it created a cultural exchange at the regional level. Two local TV stations (ABC and CBS) provided regional coverage of this event. Two bilingual trainees from a local school district were responsible for a special program on the celebration of Lunar New Year at the magnet center of an elementary school. The New Year's celebration was concluded with a pot luck dinner at the home of Dr. Yao, the project director. All trainees were asked to prepare an Oriental dish. A game of cross-cultural body language was played for entertainment following the dinner.

The trainees' major tasks for the spring semester were the instruction of the developed materials to their classroom children and the preparation of activities handbook and teachers' handbook. "A Handbook of Activities and Resources for Teaching about Asian American in the Elementary School" was edited by Dr. Philip J. Lanasa, co-director of the project and xerox duplicated by Ginn Custom Publishing Company. Copies of this handbook are available at the UH/CLC bookstore. The teachers handbook edited by Dr. Esther Lee Yao "Teacher's Handbook for Teaching and Working with Oriental

Students and Their Parents" has been included by ERIC. The index number is ED 187 095, 1979.

A workshop in-service named Asian-American EXPO 1979 held on May 5th was the most stimulating event of this project. The contents of the workshop included twenty activity centers for cultural display, prepared and constructed by all trainees and three classroom sessions presented by the trainees on a rotating schedule. The cultural display centered on six regions: Japan, Korea, China, Southeast Asia, East India and the Philippines. The display contained teaching modules, teacher made audio-visual materials, artifacts, and musical instruments. The classroom presentations by trainees had three sessions on a rotating basis. Topics of the presentation were 1) The history/heritage of the six regions: differences and similarities; 2) Problems of Asian-American school children of their parents and how to work with them in the public school setting and 3) Curriculum design for Asian-American ethnic studies, including theory, methodology and process.

V. Evaluation of the Training Program

The success of this proposed training program for elementary school teachers was evaluated from two perspectives. Since the objectives of this program took both cognitive and affective domains into consideration, evaluation was made in these two areas.

The knowledge gained by the trainees in ethnic studies and curriculum planning was determined by the difference of pre and post assessments. A Cognitive Test (CT) was constructed by Drs. Esther Lee Yao and Philip J. Lanasa based on the 12-credit hour course content and given to the participants prior

to course instruction. The CT was administered at the end of the first semester and upon completion of the 12-credit hour course in the spring semester as past assessment. The same proceedure was used for an Attitude Inventory (AI) which measured the changes in attitude of the trainees toward ethnic groups and toward teaching ethnic studies.

The T statistical analysis was applied to determine the gained knowledge and changing attitude of the trainees. The difference of CT between pre test taken in September 1978 and post test taken in April 1979 was found significant at .01 level with df=19 (T=11.30). The AI also demonstrated significant change (T=7.92) between September 1978 and April 1979.

The trainees' accomplishments are not only reflected by their scores on pre and post tests, but also in the workshop on May 5th which was completely designed and executed by themselves. They were able to make use of the knowledge they gained throughout the training project. They felt confident to share their knowledge and experience with other school teachers during the in-service workshop. As compared with their colleagues not in the program, they found they were much more knowledgeable about Asian-American culture and heritage.

In addition to the achievement of the students, the performance of the instructors was also evaluated by their students. As required by the University, all instructors are rated by students based upon their teaching efficiency and course evaluation. Both instructors, Drs. Esther Lee Yao and Philip J. Lanasa were highly appraised by the trainees of the program.

Not surprisingly, such rewarding feelings and experiences did not end with the training project. On June 1st, a pot luck dinner was given by the entire group in honor of a trainee who was moving to California. The interpersonal relationships established and enjoyed during the project period are one of the most rewarding segments which will not diminish even after the successful conclusion of the training program.

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